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# Troubles films to feature at Toronto festival

Monday, 25 August 2008

Two new movies based on aspects of the Troubles have been selected for the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival next month.

Hunger and Fifty Dead Men Walking — which were filmed in Northern Ireland — will be shown during the festival, which runs from September 4

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What are these?



A still from the award-winning movie Hunger which is based on the last six weeks in the life of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands

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to 13.

Toronto is on a par with other premier world film festivals such as Cannes, Venice and Berlin and is considered a great launch pad for the North American market.

Hunger centres on the last six weeks in the life of Bobby Sands during the 1981 IRA hunger strike at the Maze prison.

Staring Michael Fassbender as Sands, Hunger will compete in the Discovery section for Best First Film. Discovery is a showcase for new and emerging film-makers who are certain to become household names.

Directed by Turner prize-winning artists Steve McQueen, Hunger has already won the prestigious Camera d'Or and the Critics Award at the Cannes Film Festival as well as Best Film at both the Sydney and Jerusalem festivals.

It also stars local actors Liam Cunningham (The Wind That Shakes The Barley, Breakfast On Pluto), Stuart Graham, Liam McMahon and Brian Milligan and was produced by Laura Hastings-Smith from Blast! Films and executive produced by Robin Gutch.

Hunger will be released in the UK and Ireland on October 31.

The second movie, Fifty Dead Men Walking will have a gala screening at Toronto.

The Gala programme is the Festival's high-profile showcase of Canadian and international films with major impact. The film was directed by Kari Skogland and produced by Peter La Terriere for Future Films Ltd.

Starring Jim Sturgess (21, The Other Boleyn Girl) and Sir Ben Kingsley (Gandhi, Schlinder's List), Fifty Dead Men Walking is set in the 1980s and tells the story of Martin McGartland, who was recruited by the British police to spy on the IRA. He lived under constant threat of exposure and subsequent guaranteed torture and death, but his information saved many lives. Inspired by a true story, to this day he is still on the run.

Meanwhile another movie, Hellboy, which filmed here last summer, is in cinemas nationwide now.

Richard Williams, chief executive of Northern Ireland Screen, said: "The inclusion of Hunger and Fifty Dead Men Walking in one of the world's most prestigious film festivals is fantastic news and we send our congratulations to everyone involved.

"The film and television sector has strong support in Northern Ireland — not least through the substantial investment from Invest NI.

"It is also excellent to see the wealth of stunning locations we can offer."

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